

WILBUR, CURTIS D.

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SPEECHES

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Speeches Honoring Abraham Lincoln

Curtis D. Wilbur

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Address of Hon. Curtis D. Wilbur, Secretary of the Navy
at Lincoln Memorial University Celebration, New Willard
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Abraham Lincoln is a name that has inspired historians, orators and poets. What can we add today to his fame, or gain from his life. He has been praised by the whole world. We can add nothing to that praise, and yet every year has added to his prestige, not because he has changed, but because his life has influenced more lives each year.

The direct effect of his efforts has been incalculable. He preserved the Union, and that Union, grown great and powerful, preserved the world. These results are direct and understandable. It was a United America that added its wealth and man power to the allied cause, secured a unified command, and attained an allied victory.

However, the true significance of Abraham Lincoln is not to be found in wars, in victories, in political results, vastly significant as such results may be, but in the man himself. His spectacular rise from the humble log cabin to the official and actual leadership of a great nation appeals to the imagination of mankind. It is an inspiring example of success - a demonstration of the significance of our form of government, a unique illustration of the working of a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." This example has inspired other peoples to strive for and attain such a government of opportunity for the people. He has advanced the cause of mankind not only by the success he achieved in preserving the Union, but also because he, a man of humble birth, was permitted to seek and attain that success.

But the fame of Abraham Lincoln will be found not only written in the amendments to our Constitution, not only in new constitutions of new republics, but also in

the hearts of men. We need for this life not only food and clothing for our bodies, but also food for our souls. Men may feed upon the soul of Abraham Lincoln and refresh their own spirit, even as our bodies are renewed and strengthened by meat and drink. We can refresh our own discouraged souls, by the courage with which he faced the complex and harassing problem of a government in the throes of an awful war. As a young man in the legislature of Illinois he said to his friends:

"You may burn my body to ashes and scatter them to the winds of heaven; you may drag my soul down to the regions of darkness and despair to be tormented forever, but you will never get me to support a measure which I believe to be wrong, although by doing so I may accomplish that which I believe to be right."

This indomitable spirit of the frontier lad who without opportunity for education, without schooling, without books, or teachers trained his mind and soul for the great problems of leadership, and by the power of his spirit and the strength of his will carried his followers through the sacrifices, the blood and the tears necessary to preserve a new nation, and give to it a "new birth of freedom," is a source of inspiration and uplift to all who seek to understand. His resourcefulness, his unfaltering determination to mass all the powers of government - all its wealth and man power - in the effort to attain victory and to preserve for others the liberty and opportunity he had enjoyed and by which he had so wonderfully profited, inspired other leaders, in the Great War to make similar efforts to preserve democracy. The life of Abraham Lincoln was thus an inspiration to the leaders in England, in France and Italy, and in Japan to overcome discouragement and to turn disaster and defeat into triumphant victory. If the material resources, and the man power of the Union turned the tide to victory in the last months of the war, it was the spirit of Lincoln, and to some extent his example that contributed to the tenacious fight, in the face of frequent and overwhelming disaster and discouragement, in the years that preceded the entrance of America into the war. Soldiers who never heard of Lincoln were sustained and inspired to deeds of desperate valor by the words and the example of those who had fortified their souls by drinking at the fountain of Lincoln's life,

and thus his spirit and his courage were passed on to them - they were strong because he was strong, they fought for freedom and liberty because he wrought for it and loved it.

But other men have been determined, other men have fought against great odds, and have been successful. We find in Lincoln not only courage, unalterable determination, and resistless energy, not only success and victory, but also supreme faith in the success of right. To be right in one's cause was to be certain of victory regardless of the strength of one's opponent. Right was synonymous with might. It was the source of might, and in the ultimate test only the might sustained by right could succeed. It was this conviction which sustained Lincoln in the darkest hours of the Civil War. The keynote of the Cooper Union speech was the principle that sustained Lincoln when others faltered and failed. "Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it."

General Maurice in summing up the reasons for victory in the World War says:

"It is idle to argue as to who won the war. Germany could not have been beaten in the field, as she was beaten, without the intimate cooperation of all the Allied armies on the Western Front directed by a great leader, nor without the coordination for a common purpose of all the resources of the Allies - naval, military, industrial and economic. If victory is to be attributed to any one cause, then that cause is not to be found in the wisdom of any one statesman, the valour of any one army, the progress of any navy, or in the skill of any one general. Our triumph was due to the justice of our cause and to the faith to which, even in the darkest days, the free peoples of the world held firmly, - the faith that right is might."

Lincoln saw in the Civil War not only a test of our institutions - of a government founded upon the equality of man and his inalienable right to freedom - but a test of the Ruler of the Universe, and of the laws established by Him. Lincoln believed in the freedom of man - in his inherent rights, as derived from the Creator, and for that reason he could not conceive of the possibility of failure in a contest to establish the supremacy of these rights.

In his "Lost Speech" of 1856 he is quoted as follows:

"The battle of freedom is to be fought out on principles. Slavery is a violation of eternal right. We have temporized with it from the necessities of our conditions, but as sure as God reigns and school children read, that black foul lie can never be consecrated into God's hallowed truth."

Lincoln had so sublime a faith in man that it reached back of the man to his Creator. Lincoln's life therefore is a living expression of the faith of a man in a just God - a faith that justice must triumph because the Ruler of man is just.

"Those who deny freedom to others," he said, "deserve it not for themselves; and under the rule of a just God cannot long retain it."

Faith is perpetuated by lives inspired to worthy deeds by an inner conviction, not by pious expressions or assertion of such faith.

But Lincoln is an inspiration not only because he had an unquenchable faith in the rightness of God, but also because he had a profound faith in man, and because his faith in man and in his Creator was founded in a love of man which shone through his whole life. His kindness to his neighbors and friends, his unselfishness, his meager legal fees, his kindness to the soldier and to the sailor, his pardons, his words of charity and forgiveness, all give us the clue to the inner life in which abode a tolerant love for man with all his faults and unlovliness.

We can not do better on this natal day of Lincoln than to taste anew of his courage, of his faith and of his love and to renew our devotion to the cause of liberty and equality, and to the form of government in which it finds its fullest expression - to the government "of the people, by the people and for the people" - and to pledge anew our faith in the justice and guidance of the God Who led Abraham Lincoln and his people through the wilderness of Civil War to peace and plenty, Who sustained His courage and justified His faith in that fateful and awful journey.

Anna D. Sullivan
-4-

ADDRESS OF HON. CURTIS D. WILBUR BEFORE THE NATIONAL REPUBLICAN CLUB, NEW YORK CITY, February 12, 1927.

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

"God must have loved the common people because he made so many of them". In this whimsical fashion Abraham Lincoln expressed his unalterable faith in mankind. He was born in Kentucky upon land ceded by the State of Virginia to the federal government as a pledge of its faith in the union of the states. He had lived here and in Indiana, and in Illinois, in pioneer days, in constant contact with the common people who had, like himself and his father, benefitted by the generous purpose of the new nation to distribute its land among those pioneers who by their action in settling, purposed to take advantage of the generosity of the nation. Abraham Lincoln not only himself believed in the common people, but also he believed in a just Providence which was working out the destiny of man. It was in 1860, here at the Cooper Union Institute in this city, that Lincoln tersely expressed that faith in the concluding sentence of his justly celebrated address --

".....let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it."

He accepted the principle announced in the Declaration of Independence that governments were ordained to preserve the peace and happiness of the people. After two years of war, on one of the bloody battlefields, he declared his faith in a government conceived in liberty and dedicated to the equality of man, and there called upon his fellow citizens to pledge anew their devotion to that government to the end that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, should not perish from the earth, but that there should be a new birth of freedom. It is appropriate that on the birthday of Abraham Lincoln we should renew our faith in that form of government, and to that end it may be well to take note of the progress that has been made on this continent in the great experiment of government by the people. Although the colonies which formed this government had endured for nearly 150 years before the Declaration of Independence, and the United States of America has endured for 150 years since that time, it must be conceded, as we survey the wrecks of governments strewn along the pathway of time, that our government is still an experiment. Eighty-seven years after the government was formed, while it was undergoing the test of a civil war, Lincoln saw in that war a test of the union and the principles upon which it was based. The question was whether such a government could endure the strains of internal dissension. Sixty-five years later, Woodrow Wilson saw in the World War a test of whether such a government could endure

against the aggression of autocratic forms of government still existing. We have survived both of these tests. The strength of this government was attested to in both of these wars. We are not confronted with a new and altogether unexpected menace. We, who have believed in a government by the people, are confronted by a campaign for world revolution and advocating a dictatorship by a minority -- the proletariat. We, who have believed in the equality of man and a government by all of the people, are confronted by the spectacle of an autocratic government turned upside down so that instead of a dictatorship by a czar, we have a dictatorship by the proletariat. We believe in neither czars nor proletariat, but in the dignity of the individual man. Under our theory of government it is like a pyramid. No matter how often it is overturned, it is still the same height and has the same composition. The top cannot go to the bottom, nor the bottom come to the top, because there is no top and no bottom. Or like the sphere, constantly revolving, we have rotation in office. People are entering into the responsibilities of office-holding, and departing from it, and yet always remaining a part of the people. We need not fear revolution because our government is constantly revolving, with almost a complete revolution every four years. United States Senators and the judges of some of our courts, alone, having longer periods of office.

The unique characteristic of this government is that it is a government by the people. All governments have been governments of the people, and most of them have claimed to be for the people, but in a unique sense, this is a government by the people. Inasmuch as the period since the Civil War has been one in which our people have more and more come to a realization that our government belongs to them, it will be appropriate to examine some of the expressions of that belief as manifested in the structure of our government. It has been manifested in many ways, but in no way more than in the changes made in the constitution of the United States, and of the several states, and in the increasing flood of legislation. Indignant protests against tampering with fundamental law and well established principles, and against the flood of legislation, have been insufficient to prevent these changes. The people believe that they own the government and are entitled to use it in working out their problems, which confront them in nation and the state. There has been, in a very true sense, a new birth of liberty. It is because of the effect of Abraham Lincoln's attitude and teaching upon this new birth of liberty that it is particularly appropriate to speak of it tonight. One of the immediate results of the Civil War was the writing into the Constitution of the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments; the 13th abolishing slavery, the 14th and 15th establishing definitely, and for the first time, the rights of the citizens of the United States, not only within their own states, but also in any other state of the Union. Here was a new charter of liberty, not only to the slave but to all the citizens of the United States. It is difficult for anyone other than a student of law to appreciate the significance and the far-reaching effect of these three amendments. It is not too much to say that the late Constitutional amendments, giving the Federal government power to levy an income tax; providing for the direct election of senators, and granting women suffrage, all grew out of this

same expanding period of liberty which had its birth in the Declaration of Independence, and its new birth in the constitutional amendments resulting from the Civil War.

This same spirit of faith in the common people has caused us to expand the right of suffrage to all citizens and to enact liberal laws for the naturalization of all worthy residents. It has caused us to elaborate means for the free expression by the individual citizen of his will concerning the government -- the secret ballot, which gives independence in voting; the Australian ballot which tends to weaken the ties of party and put upon the individual the burden of selecting individual office holders without slavish adherence to party; the increased protection of the ballot by registration and the various methods utilized for identifying the individual voter for the prevention of fraud. All these indicate a determination to give the individual an opportunity to participate in the government. In addition to the method of balloting, the power of the voter has been increased. It is true that the Declaration of Independence declares that all governments derive their just power from the consent of the governed. Nevertheless, the authors of this declaration, as well as those who preceded them in the several colonies in the government of those colonies, and those who succeeded them in the constitutional convention, and those who enacted the laws for the government of the states, were careful to restrict the right of suffrage to a comparative few, and so organized the government that a majority of the people could never enact legislation or modify the constitution by a mere preponderance of the voters. The system of state and district representation made that impossible. New York's delegation in the House of Representatives greatly preponderated over that of Rhode Island, New Jersey and Delaware, but in the Senate her voice was only equal to that of the smaller states. This same idea was carried out to some extent within the several states, and in some municipalities therein. The referendum, the initiative and the recall, by which a majority of the voters could express themselves for or against specific legislation or could terminate the authority of governmental officials whose performance in office had been unsatisfactory, was an entirely new expression of government by the people. Not only in the government itself have the people taken more immediate control, but they have also assumed greater control in the selection of public officials. The direct primary for the selection of party candidates for office, and for the selection of non-partisan candidates; the extension of non-partisan selection of public officers to school boards, and to be judges, county and municipal officers, are among the methods used for controlling the personnel of our officials. It is clear, then, that not only have the people extended the guarantees of the Constitution of private rights, but that they have also multiplied the means by which they can express themselves in the operation of that government.

It remains to consider some of the ways in which this increased opportunity for the people to express their will has been exercised in the actual governing of the nation. Let us first consider the judicial department of the government. Here we would expect to find fewer changes than in any other department and yet there has been a vast change. There has been a turning away from technicalities. This has sometimes been brought about

by the courts themselves, and sometimes by legislative and sometimes by constitutional mandates. I think it can be safely said that there has been a pronounced tendency to emphasize justice at the expense of technicality in the administration of the whole body of the law. There has, however, been a remarkable departure in the administration of justice which strikingly illustrates the new attitude of the people toward their government. Into the field of the criminal law has been injected the juvenile court law with its provisions for dealing with children up to 18 years of age; the probation law; the indeterminate sentence and the parole system. The whole scheme of criminal law as now administered in most states puts the emphasis upon the reform of the criminal while undergoing punishment under the jurisdiction of the court. The result of the extension of the law of kindness and mercy into the field of retributive justice has been extraordinary and is well worthy of the attention of every public spirited citizen. Thousands and tens of thousands of people have been saved to good citizenship by these new methods of procedure, but the important part to consider in connection with the subject under discussion is that we have come to a realization that the government belongs to the people and that we do not have to exact the full measure of punishment laid down in the law unless we deem it wise to do so. That is to say the law itself affords an opportunity for flexibility for making the punishment fit the criminal as well as the crime. We recognize that the function of government in its administration of criminal laws is to make the nation safe for its citizens, and if that safety can be secured by reformation of the criminal, we can bend our efforts in that direction rather than in an attempt to exercise the prerogative of the Almighty. We no longer require a judge to sentence a boy of tender years to the penitentiary because he has stolen a stick of candy from a lunch wagon, and, therefore, committed a crime of burglary. And if an adult has, under sudden stress, violated the criminal law for the first time, we have confided to our judges the power of dealing with him through reformatory rather than punitive means.

In the field of the judicial departments, we have more and more endeavored to perfect a means for securing the best material to fill judicial positions. We have expanded the jury service so that in many jurisdictions any citizen, male or female, may sit on a jury regardless of whether they're freeholders or not.

When we turn to the legislative department, we find that there has been a vast flood of legislation throughout the United States, particularly in the last 15 years. We find here an obvious purpose to better the condition of our citizens. With reference to children, we not only have the juvenile court law, the compulsory school law, the child labor law, the mothers' pension law, laws for the punishment of parents for the desertion of children and for enforcing their rights in court, but we have the vast field of legislation dealing with education. In the educational field, not only has there been a vast increase in the number of educational institutions, particularly high schools, junior colleges and universities, but also there has been a vast increase in the number in attendance in the public and private schools of the nation. This increased attention to education is partly due to an awakened sense of the importance of education,

partly due to the laws prohibiting children from labor, partly due to compulsory school laws, and partly due to the general prosperity of the country.

In legislation concerning women, we have the state statutes and the constitutional amendment extending to them the right of suffrage and giving to them an equal participation in the affairs of government. We have in many jurisdictions extended to them the right to sit on juries and to hold public office. Laws have been enacted liberalizing the property rights of married women, putting them more nearly on a parity with married men. Their rights over their separate property have been increased, and their powers over that property, without reference to the consent of the husband, have been extended. A liberal provision for motherhood through mothers' pension laws, and liberal allowance through juvenile court for the support of children, where the mother and father both are indigent, and the shortening of hours for labor for women, are some of the ways in which the increased participation of the people in their government has found expression.

In the field of labor we have had a multitude of laws looking towards the amelioration of the condition of the working man. Most notable among these is the workmen's compensation law, by which the burden of personal injuries and death due to the conduct of the industry, have been partly placed upon the industry itself, regardless of the question of negligence. Legislation for the establishment of safety devices to protect workmen from the hazards of their performance; legislation shortening the hours of labor; providing public employment offices; laws restricting immigration, and laws for the protection of American industries against foreign competition, are among the notable advances in legislation for the benefit of the working man.

In taxation matters, there is a growing tendency to tax the wealthy man not only upon the ad valorem principle upon his capital, but also upon his income, at rates which increase with the amount of that income. The inheritance tax laws have become well nigh universal and result in taking a substantial part of the corpus of the property of the rich for the maintenance of state and national government. Thus a vast portion of the sum required to educate the children in our public schools is paid by the wealthy people of the nation, thus furnishing to every child an opportunity regardless of the financial situation of the parents.

In the executive branch of the government there has not only been a check in the method of selection of elective officers, but there has been an extension of the principles of civil service to a vast number of employees in the national, state and municipal government. The routine functions of government of the nation, of the state, and of the city, are largely carried on by civil service employees, leaving general principles of government to be determined by officers elected by the people through the medium of their political parties. The civil service system not only tends to secure faithful service, but by removing the self-interest of an employee in an election, removes one of the greatest obstacles to free government.

We are apt to think of Abraham Lincoln as having freed four million slaves. He was the great emancipator, but his purpose was entirely different from that. He desired to free the minds of men from the curse of slavery. He not only liberated four million slaves, but he liberated the minds of thirty-two million people from the curse of slavery. It was in eradicating from the hearts of the citizens of this land, their adherence to slavery that Lincoln most greatly triumphed. Indeed, it was this he sought to bring about. He wanted slavery kept out of the new states. He wanted men in the new states to be free and to be created in an atmosphere of freedom. He was at first willing that slavery be continued in the states where it existed. He wanted to see men's minds expanding toward freedom rather than embracing slavery. We see about us evidences on every hand that the spirit of freedom is in the souls of men. There were draft riots in the Civil War because men felt themselves to be something apart from the government. There were none in the World War because every citizen had learned to feel that it was his war and that the principle of selective service was a new advance of the principles of freedom, and that service was among the obligations of citizenship.

We are building here a government. The foundations for that government were laid in early English history. Our forefathers who came to this country and established the colonies, in procuring their charters, and enacting the earlier laws for their guidance, were building on these foundations. The Declaration of Independence was erected upon these foundations. It was followed by the constitution of the United States, by the amendments to that constitution resulting from the Civil War, by the constitutions of the several states, by the vast number of judicial decisions interpreting constitutions and statutes, and by a flood of legislation. Some of these laws and some of these constitutional provisions have been repealed or superseded, but in the main we have been building into the structure those things that our children will inherit from us. They must live and dwell within the government which we hand down to them.

There are in Washington two monuments, the Washington monument and the Lincoln Memorial, facing each other across the Mirror Pool. At the height of about 150 feet on the Washington monument there is a distinct line around the monument marking the point at which its construction ceased in 1852, to be resumed about 1880. Up to this point, the monument was erected in times of slavery and perhaps, in part by slave labor. It was left standing here unfinished. As the dissensions leading to the Civil War increased, and during the entire period of that civil war, Abraham Lincoln could see the unfinished structure from the windows of his office in the White House, and when he pondered upon the durability of this nation, he no doubt wondered whether that monument would ever be completed. It remained for a re-united nation to complete the monument which is itself a symbol of union as well as a memorial for George Washington. And now, the statue of Abraham Lincoln gazes out across the Mirror Pool to the completed monument. We can easily imagine the spirit of Lincoln rejoicing in the completed monument, and noting with pride the line which marks the passage from slavery to freedom. And so with the structure which we are building about us. Slavery has been eliminated and the structure being erected is being fashioned by men who have minds that are free. By men who recognize the

dignity of man, the worth of the working man; who feel that it is the highest function of government to give to every man an opportunity to advance, and while advancing to be equal to every other man under the laws of the land.

Tonight we celebrate the birth in a humble frontier cabin of the man whose faith and whose fidelity as a leader means so much to us today, and whose work will mean so much to our children and children's children, so long as freedom and equality and justice live in the hearts of men. At this annual banquet of the National Republican Club it is not only fitting that we should recollect a man whose birthday we celebrate, but that we should consider the party which supported him during his life and carried on his work after he was dead. It is not our purpose tonight to criticize any other party, or to compare the Republican party with the efforts of those it has opposed. It is sufficient for our purpose to call attention to the fact that the principles of liberty for which Lincoln stood have been wrought out not only in the national government, in the times when the Republican party was in the ascendancy, but that they have also found root and have blossomed in the states where the Republican party has been in control. No one would claim perfection for any party. Rather the parties must be judged by their general course of conduct and by the results achieved by them when in power, and the statute books of the states, constitutions of the Republican states, and the constitution and laws of the United States, bear witness to the fidelity of Lincoln's party to the principles of Abraham Lincoln. If, in Democratic states and in Democratic administrations there has been adherence to the principles of Abraham Lincoln, it can at least be said that the Republican party has not been lax in developing those principles, and insofar as both parties have moved forward along these lines, we can rejoice in the greater unity of the nation. It is inspiring not only to consider the advance of the principles of Abraham Lincoln in the development of the government of the United States, but inspiring to see the material advance of the nation during this period of its increased liberty. We must be content, however, in this direction by merely stating that the annual income enjoyed by the people of the United States today is nearly four times the total of the property value of the United States at the time Abraham Lincoln took his oath of office. The liberty which has been of such tremendous advantage to us in governmental lines, has so permeated the mind of man that he has been free to develop industry, to invent new methods, and to develop scientific knowledge. If the governmental world inherited by our children is different from that we inherited from our ancestors, how vastly different is the material universe they see about them to their understanding. The telephone, the telegraph, the radio, electric power, all of which we have seen gradually coming into our life, will be part of their every day life. They are searching for the keys of mysteries which we did not even know existed.

We have profited by the spirit of Abraham Lincoln and by his labors. Can we say as much for the world? Is it not true that when Abraham Lincoln was striving to save a nation, he was really saving the world? It is only because we had a prosperous and united nation that it was possible for us to participate effectively in the World War. It was the men of the North and of the South, shoulder to shoulder, on the battlefields of France, that

turned the tide in favor of the free peoples of the world. Lincoln's spirit, his indomitable courage, his persistence, under the most disheartening disaster, stimulated the Englishman, the Frenchman, the Italian, the Belgian and the Russian, and all the allied nations put forth heroic efforts. The spiritual accomplishments of Abraham Lincoln were of untold benefit to the allies, but it took more than this spirit to win the war. It was the actual, physical result of Lincoln's efforts, a united and prosperous nation, capable of exercising physical force, that brought about the end of the war. General Maurice, commenting upon the last four months of the war, ends his book with an appraisal of the contribution of each allied nation. The book is a bewildering detail of the marching and counter-marching of millions of men engaged in ceaseless battle. It tells the story of the death of millions of men during that four months upon the battlefield. It appraises the conduct of generals, describes their strategy, and indicates the causes of success or failure. But the book closes with this appraisal: "If the victory is to be ascribed to any one cause more than another cause, it must be ascribed to the unquenchable faith of the allies in the principle that right makes might." So this English general, seeking to appraise the causes of victory, finds in the words of Abraham Lincoln, uttered upon the public platform at the Cooper Union Building in New York City in 1860, a declaration of the faith which had so permeated the free peoples of the earth, that they fought through to a successful conclusion the most terrible war in the history of mankind.

And now we must turn from this picture of victory, of growing liberty, of prosperity, of happiness, to the tasks of the future. We contemplate with pride the predominant position of the United States of America among the nations of the world. We are grateful that a Republican form of government has demonstrated its stability. We rejoice that other nations have accepted that form of government. We are glad that the Chinese people have declared their adherence to a Republican form of government, and we regret that they are engaged in a mighty civil war. We hope that their war, like ours, may lead to increased liberty and justice and prosperity and union. We rejoice that every nation now on this hemisphere is republican in form of government, and we recognize the handiwork of Washington and Monroe and Abraham Lincoln, as well as the patriots in each of these nations. We find peace and prosperity at home, but abroad we find a new peril, declaring spiritual warfare and ready to declare material warfare upon the people of this nation. Where our children are willing to listen, they are taught the ways of the Third Internationale. We find its hand clutching at the heart of our sister republic on the South. We find it stirring up trouble in Asia, in China, in Nicaragua. This government by the people it is said, has become imperialistic. We felt that by putting in every man's hand the ballot and giving him a free chance to exercise his right of suffrage, we were as far removed as possible from any imperialism at home or abroad. Knowing ourselves as we do, knowing our form of government as we do, and the purpose of its people, we are inclined to take lightly this new form of attack which seeks to destroy the foundations of this government, namely the home and the sense of religious obligations. It would destroy home and government and God. In the face of this insidious

propaganda within our own territory and in other nations, it behooves us to be vigilant, in the training of the young and in answering the mis-statements and misrepresentations put forth to destroy this government.

We owe it to ourselves to be strong, to maintain an adequate army and navy. Yes, we owe it to others to be strong in order that if there is to be a world revolution, we may, by our example, if not by our army and navy, assist weaker nations to maintain free government. Yes, our marines are crossing the Pacific, -- to Shanghai, to safeguard the lives of American citizens, living in a nation so torn by conflicting interests and arms that it may not be able to protect them. If it can protect them we have no occasion nor desire to land our marines.

We have marines landed in Nicaragua. They were landed at the urgent request of the recognized government of that state to protect American citizens which the President of that Republic announced he himself was unable to do. There have been charges of imperialism and intervention, but no shot has been fired by a marine. No engagement has taken place between the Americans and any other force. They are protecting American property and maintaining a neutral attitude between the contending forces, while recognizing the rightful sovereignty of the Diaz government.

Allow me to tell an incident that occurred in 1925 when our marines left Managua and embarked on the HENDERSON to return to Quantico, Virginia. I happened to be on the HENDERSON. It certainly was a gallant sight to see these marines come down the wharf with their flags flying and their band playing, after ten years service in Nicaragua. I learned afterwards that the reason the detachment was so large, 125 men, was in order that a band could be included with the legation guard because the music of the band had helped to maintain peace and order in Nicaragua. The government of Nicaragua, desiring to give expression to its friendship for the departing marines and for the government of the United States, through their minister of state and war, tendered an invitation to the Secretary of the Navy and the officers of the ship to an extemporaneous banquet in the little town of Corinto. There the Secretary of State, a graduate of our military academy at West Point, told the following incident concerning the American flag. He said one day in an argument on the floor of the Nicaraguan Parliament, a member of the opposition pointed out to the American flag flying in front of the legation guard and asked "What is that flag doing there?" The minister said that he arose in his place and replied as follows: "You remember, when Zelaya was dictator. Today you were at liberty, tomorrow you were cast in prison, and the next day you were executed, all without a trial. The property you owned today was taken from you tomorrow without trial and without compensation. Today you are at liberty, tomorrow you are not imprisoned except for crime, and if charged with crime, you are tried, fairly and impartially, and if convicted, you are imprisoned in accordance with the judgment of the court. The property you own today you own tomorrow. Life and property are safe." "That" he said "is what that flag means."

A year later in San Francisco an elderly man came aboard the CALIFORNIA and asked to see the Secretary of the Navy. I was on board

and granted the interview. It was the former president of the Nicaraguan republic, a land which had been torn by revolution and strife almost from the moment our marines left, after nearly 15 years of peace and quiet. He wanted me to convey a message to the Secretary of State. He told me he had no desire to return to the presidency and no interest in the problem other than in his country. "I want my people to have peace, and to have a chance to work." "I am grieved" he said "at this civil strife and hope and pray that some way peace may come to my distracted land". And I believe that peace will come to Nicaragua and that is what the American flag means there in 1927, as it meant in 1925 and in 1915. That is what the American flag means in Haiti, peace and an opportunity for the people to work. That is what it means in the Philippines, that is what it means throughout the territory of the United States. I pray that my country may be strong on land and on sea in order that the liberties for which Abraham Lincoln and those who served under him, fought and struggled, shall be preserved, not only to our children, but to our children's children for a thousand generations. That is what the American flag means to you and to me.

If there was a new birth of freedom at the time of Abraham Lincoln, and because of his work, our children will profit by it. If we have been wise in expanding the principles of liberty and in assuming greater jurisdiction over the governmental machinery, our children will profit by it. We are erecting a temple of justice in which our children must dwell, just as truly as we are erecting skyscrapers, suspension bridges and subways, in which they shall live and move and have their being. We have received an inheritance, purchased by blood and toil. It is for us to add to that inheritance that which we are able, and to hand it down to those who follow us. Their happiness will depend in part upon our fidelity to that which has gone before us and to those who come after us.

FOR RELEASE TO PAPERS ON MONDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 13th, SPEECH BEING DELIVERED
SUNDAY NIGHT, the 12th.

ADDRESS OF HON. CURTIS D. WILDER before the Mid-Day Luncheon
Club of Springfield, Illinois, February 12th, 1928.

"ABRAHAM LINCOLN ---- A Spiritual Inheritance"

On the evening of April 14th, 1865, a bullet fired from the pistol of an assassin plowed its way through the great brain that had for four years been thinking and planning to preserve the Union, and in a few hours Abraham Lincoln was dead. Standing by his bedside when Lincoln's spirit fled from its earthly tabernacle, Stanton pronounced the solemn judgment "Now he belongs to the ages".

What is it that belongs to the ages? What is it that belongs to you and to me, and to our children for a thousand generations? Is it not above all else Lincoln's interpretation of God, and of His relation to man and man's duty, and to his opportunities and accomplishments?

On leaving Springfield to take up the tasks of the Presidency in the time of darkness and uncertainty that preceded the Civil War, referring to George Washington he said "I feel that I cannot succeed without the same Divine aid which sustained him, and in the same Almighty Being I place my reliance for support." In his first inaugural address, he appealed to both sides to pause in their threatened conflict and to await the judgment of a just God. "If the Almighty Ruler of Nations, with his eternal truth and justice be on your side of the North or on your side of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal, the American people". Lincoln has been referred to more than once as a prophet of God.

He was one of the American prophets who gives to us our American conception of God. We worship the God of the Hebrews, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, but as a nation we also join in the worship of the God of George Washington and of Abraham Lincoln. We worship Lincoln's God. The faith of the average American, of the man in the street, the common soldier, the common sailor, is in Abraham Lincoln and in Lincoln's God. To the Jew, to the Protestant, to the Catholic, to all Americans, he gives a conception of man's relation to God, and of God's relation to man. Thus he gives to this generation of Americans a philosophy of life, still living in their hearts, something which is still active in legislative halls, in judicial chambers, and executive offices; something that still steels the arm of the soldier and the sailor for conflict; something which helped win the World War, and which will help us win in all future wars. In this aspect Lincoln is no mere historical figure. He is a vital force operating in the hearts of all who believe in and act upon his interpretations of human life and its relationships. It is immaterial whether he accepted current theological dogma or creed or whether his belief was perfect, or even that it was correct. The influence he exerts is based upon our belief in Lincoln's spiritual vision, and is in a measure inde-

pendent of its truth or falsity. But it was not false.

A fundamental conception of Lincoln's was that right would be triumphant ... "Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it", said Lincoln at Cooper Institute in 1860. This idea of God's providence and man's duty was familiar to Christian and Jew alike. This was no mere rhetorical flourish. It was a profound conviction and for four long weary years, a nation followed Lincoln in that faith, a faith that was justified to his countrymen and to the world. It was this faith, a half-century later, stimulated and exemplified by Lincoln, which kept the Allies to their task in the World War until the nation that Lincoln saved came to the rescue and after that all the allied nations were held to other to their task until victory was achieved by the faith of Lincoln in the triumph of righteousness. General Maurice, after summing up the contributions made by all the forces that contributed to the final victory achieved on Armistice Day, 1918, says ... "If victory is to be ascribed to one cause more than any other, it must be ascribed to the faith that right makes might".

But what is right? Lincoln in appraising the situation in 1856 said that the difference between the South and the North was that the former believed slavery right and the latter believed it wrong. Both, then, fought in the Civil War for what they believed was right, and both hoped for the reward of success to the righteous in such a fight. Both prayed to the same God for victory. But Lincoln believed that God could not be so unjust as to condemn some men to slavery and to give to others ownership in human beings. He had a keen sense of justice and he believed in the dignity of man as man. He saw in this nation an instrument in the hands of God to work out His plans for the liberty and equality of man everywhere and for all time. In the Civil War, with its sorrows, its tears, with its heart-aches and bloodshed, he saw an experiment in the laboratory of God to test the verity of the foundations of this republic, the truth of the Declaration of Independence. Would God let a nation die whose government was built upon the foundation of man's equality and freedom? Was this foundation rock or sand? Lincoln believed it to be the rock of eternal truth.

Lincoln took the nation and its soldiers down into the valley of the shadow of death, to see whether or not there in that darkness there was a God whose heart sorrowed with the slave under the lash, and who wrought with the soldier who fought for his liberation. Lincoln did not believe that right would triumph of itself merely because it was right. He was not a pacifist. He called for soldiers, guns, for ammunition, and for more soldiers. He did not expect Grant nor Sherman nor Sheridan to win battles merely because they were fighting in a righteous cause. It was only when he had done everything possible to help Mead that he sought divine aid for our forces at Gettysburg. To an intimate friend, he said "I got down on my knees and prayed to Almighty God for victory at Gettysburg. I told him this was his war, our cause was his cause, that we could not stand another Fredericksburg or Chancellorsville. Then and there I made a solemn vow that if he would stand by our boys at Gettysburg, I would stand by him. He did and I will. I do not know how to explain it, but a sweet peace crept into

my soul and I knew things would go all right at Gettysburg".

But our knowledge of Lincoln's faith does not rest on the testimony of this friend, nor on his many public and private statements of his faith and his purpose. In all the cruel years of war, men needed only to study his actions to know that he held undimmed the faith he had declared at Cooper Institute that right makes might. It was not so much what he said in his speeches and public documents, or in private conversation, but his firm perseverance in the face of unheard of difficulties that declared his faith to his countrymen louder than words.

Men who believe that wars can always be averted by compromise, by prayer, by peaceful resolution, or by good will; or that God will spare his people oppression or war because of their faith in Him, do not follow in the footsteps of Lincoln who said that he had a vow registered in heaven to protect and preserve the Union, and in fulfilling that vow sought the favor of God, as he gathered an army and assembled a navy to defend the Union. He saw that he had a trust placed in his hands by his forefathers, and by his contemporaries, and when his prayers to the enemies of the nation to desist from its destruction proved unavailing, he girded on his sword to give proof of his faith. Buchanan did not do this. So long as we follow the leadership of Lincoln we will be willing to shed blood for liberty, for justice, and for God's plan for man's happiness.

How did this man bear himself? In a civil war, when men's hearts were filled with bitterness and hate, Lincoln lead without either. Reviled, despised, sneered at by the South and by many of the North, belittled by members of his own Cabinet; no word of hate or bitterness escaped him in the weary years when he bore the burdens of war; reconstructing the civil and military forces of the nation in the face of an active and aggressive enemy. One cannot contemplate the problems and the bearing of Lincoln without thinking of the Man of Galilee, and the religious philosopher will find in Lincoln a new manifestation of the spirit of the Son of Man. The man of the street, who finds difficulty in interpreting the life of One who lived nearly two thousand years ago, can see in Lincoln a worthy example to follow throughout life, and if he follows in the footsteps of Lincoln, follows him in his fundamental trust, in his humility; in his honesty; in his love of man as man, he will find that he is walking along the trail taken by the prophets of old. He will be walking in the footsteps of the Son of Man for Lincoln took that trail and walked in His steps. We are not trying to lift Lincoln into a new place. He already occupies it. Millions had his faith. Millions have died in that faith throughout the centuries. If his faith was no greater than theirs, he was given the unique opportunity to work out his belief in the presence of an attentive world and to demonstrate its truth to all. His people staked their fortunes and their lives on that faith and wrought with him in the council chamber and on the battlefield to win a victory for righteousness. No matter how men may estimate Lincoln's intellectual ability, no man can deny the fact that Lincoln stood before men for God's truth and carried with him in his faith the loyalty and devotion of his people. The whole world saw his faith and his victory, Right did make might.

Lincoln's work is not done. XXX He is not dead but He lives in the heart of every American. He is marching on with God in the hearts of men. He has a large part in America's spiritual inheritance. He belongs to the present

world as well as to all the ages to come.

This spiritual inheritance comes to this generation from our parents and grandparents and Lincoln's other contemporaries, quickened as they were by his faith. They worked with him, they wrought with him, they suffered with him, and they rejoiced with him. They searched his life for comfort and found it. His faith sustained them in the hour of adversity and discouragement. They became imbued with his spirit and they taught their children, and their children's children, the principles that they had learned from, and wrought out with, Abraham Lincoln. Thus, to the descendants of those who fought with him for the preservation of the Union, Lincoln becomes a source of power because of that comradeship, that loyalty and devotion, born in the heat of the struggle. But the inheritance also comes to us, and to men of the South as well as to men of the North, in a different fashion. It is a direct radiation from the personality of Lincoln. By studying his life and the principles which guided him, and by an appraisal of the results achieved by him and those who believed with him, both sides in that controversy have come to believe that Lincoln saw most clearly what was right. The South fought for what it believed was right, but the conviction is growing that Lincoln had a more clear perception than his contemporaries of the South had of what was really right in the sight of God. Lincoln thus illuminates our faith, not only by the light reflected to us from those who lived with him, but also by direct radiation from his luminous personality.

Lincoln was called upon to make decisions, and thus to manifest his interpretation of his duty to man and God.

We recognize that a man must be measured in some degree by the results of such decisions, however honestly arrived at, and it is in this aspect that the decision of Abraham Lincoln, in 1861, to furnish food and munitions to the beleaguered garrison in Fort Sumter, had its larger significance. Lincoln might have declined to do this. Some of his earnest advisors were opposed to an action which might bring on hostilities. Lincoln believed it was right and did it. As we see larger and larger results flowing from this act, as we realize its effect upon this nation, and upon the world, it is inevitable that our conception of Abraham Lincoln must grow. As we have seen the fate of this nation turn upon that act, and the consequences which have followed its preservation, and have realized that that decision to maintain the Union by force, if need be, has been reflected in the resolution of leaders in other nations to preserve and protect liberty at all hazards, our respect and admiration for Lincoln have increased. And so, it is inevitable, as long as the principles for which Lincoln stands, are maintained and recognized as right as long as the nation he saved endures; that man's respect and admiration for him shall increase. Lincoln might say of himself humbly that he did the best he could, but men today are saying that somehow that "best" was illuminated by the light and by the power of God, and that somehow in God's Providence, a child born in the shack of a pioneer in the wilds of Kentucky, on the fringe of civilization, got into his heart a knowledge of right -- of eternal truth-- which is blessing mankind more and more as the years roll on.

We say that Lincoln preserved the Union. Alexander the Great might have preserved the Union by force of arms. Caesar might have preserved the Union with his military genius. Napoleon might have taken the armies of the North, trained and disciplined them, and preserved the Union. They might have tied the Union together by hooks of steel, but Lincoln did all this and more. He

preserved, fortified, and maintained the spiritual union of the people of this nation. He never thought of the seceding states as out of the Union. He insisted that they were always in the Union. He thought of the soldiers in the army of the South as citizens of the Union; to be restored and recovered to brotherhood and citizenship. He did not hate them; he did not desire them ill-fortune. At a meeting in Springfield to celebrate his election in November, 1860, he said "Let us at all times remember that all American citizens are brothers of a common country and should dwell together in bonds of fraternal feeling." He fought through the war with that idea of American brotherhood. He only wished to defeat the South in a military sense because defeat was essential to the restoration of their rights as citizens in the Union and to the maintenance of the rights of all citizens of that Union and to restore the bonds of brotherhood. His attitude toward his enemies analyzed in the light of history has won over the hearts of the people of the South. Andrew Jackson preserved the Union when secession was raising its ugly head. He declared that the Union must and shall be preserved and those who were preaching and teaching secession realized that the time to strike had not yet come. They waited for a weaker man. But the point is that they merely waited. The cause of dis-union was not removed. Lincoln saw that a house divided against itself could not stand. That the Union could not exist half-slave and half-free, and that to maintain the Union slavery must either be absolutely and totally abolished or put in the way of final abolition so that people would rest in the knowledge that the Stars and Stripes would one day float over a nation which was all free. Lincoln fought for the Union but he recognized the cause of dis-union, and when the time came he had the courage to remove the cause by the Emancipation Proclamation. Lincoln not only preserved the governmental union by removing the cause of dis-union, and by force of arms, but by his attitude, his friendliness, his humanity, which inculcated in the hearts of his people the spirit of brotherly kindness, promoted and ultimately effectuated a spiritual union. When Grant told Lee that his army could go to their homes take their horses, and re-establish themselves without fear of prosecution for treason, he was speaking the mind of Abraham Lincoln. When Sherman similarly arranged favorable terms for Johnson's surrender, he was speaking the mind of Abraham Lincoln, but unfortunately, not the mind of Stanton or of Andrew Johnson.

Lincoln did not fight merely to enforce the contract evidenced by a parchment called the Constitution of the United States. He fought to preserve a Union in which all men should be equal and free. He fought to preserve and extend the rights of citizenship. He cemented that Union by new bonds of liberty and equality. Have we fully realized the far-reaching significance of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, which are concrete evidence of the spirit of the new union, and the lasting evidence of Lincoln's work. Not only was slavery abolished but every citizen and every alien within the territorial boundaries of the United States were guaranteed equal rights and equal privileges without regard to the treaty relations of the powers whose citizens mingled under the Stars and Stripes. The governmental union was not only preserved. It was strengthened with new ties. Lincoln lives in the Constitution of the United States.

When those who had fought in the Union armies saw some of their old antagonists and the children of those antagonists rallying to the call of President McKinley in 1898, in the Spanish American War, they realized that their struggle had not been in vain; that a real union had been effected. They tasted the fruits of victory and Union. And, then still later (in 1917) men from the North and from the South, answered the call of duty without hesitation, accepting the decision which fell to them by lot and joined the colors to fight in the World War, in

companies, in regiments, in battalions, in divisions, in corps, named without reference to the states from which they came, for the perpetuation and extension of the principles of Washington and of Lincoln, it was realized that American citizenship, definitely established for the first time in the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution as the result of the Civil War, had found its full fruition. States rights had not been impaired, but national rights called citizens of states for the time being into their larger field of activity as citizens of the United States. The spiritual union was complete; brotherhood was established, and needs only to be further developed. The union has been preserved, the cement which bound us together has hardened, so that we have become a union instead of a federation.

Lincoln not only lives in the hearts of his countrymen and in the Constitution of the United States. He lives in the Union he saved and in that union blesses mankind with an ever increasing power. We are beginning to see the possibilities of this great nation in its relationship with other nations. We realize that it was the real unity of this Union that made possible that wholehearted cooperation with the Allies in the World War, which brought victory. Lincoln foresaw that a divided nation, or two nations, on this continent, with the causes of discord removed and constantly aggravated by friction resulting from escaping slaves and other causes, would render this nation or both nations impotent in the affairs of men. If Jefferson Davis and Lee had triumphed, Hindenberg and Ludendorff would have triumphed. In this new and larger sense Lincoln belongs to the world. His fidelity to principle in time of discouragement, his creation of an army in the face of an enemy, his resourcefulness, his faith, helped all the allied nations and inspired the leaders of Great Britain facing similar problems in the World War. In a large sense and in a true sense, the leaders of the Allied powers leaned on the faith of Abraham Lincoln. They prayed to the God of Abraham Lincoln, Who, through the turmoil of war and of strife brings righteousness to pass. They felt that being right they fought on God's side. As early as 1854, Lincoln, with prophetic vision saw something of the place of a free and united America in the World. At Peoria, Illinois, he suggested that we all, North and South, readopt the Declaration of Independence. "If we do this we shall have not only saved the Union, but shall have so saved it as to make and keep it forever worthy of saving. We shall have so saved it that the succeeding millions of free, happy people the world over, shall rise up and call us blessed to the latest generation". Eight years later, with that same faith and prophetic vision, on the battlefield of Gettysburg, he again pledges his countrymen to a high resolve "that government of the people, by the people, and for the people should not perish from the earth."

We have spoken largely thus far of Lincoln as a man, as an individual, of his character, and of his faith. But we cannot disassociate a man from those who wrought with him, and it is right and fitting that the leader should have some credit for that which is done under his leadership. So, without ignoring the efforts and sacrifices made by those who wrought with him, we can say that Lincoln freed the slaves. But this is by no means all. Lincoln freed free-labor as well as slave labor. He freed the poor whites of the South as well as the common labor of the North, from the incubus of competition with slave labor. He freed them from the effects in the wage scale of competition with unpaid labor. He made possible the protection of American labor by the exclusion of immigrant labor, a result which would have been impossible if free labor at home had been compelled to compete with slave labor at home. But he did more than this. He freed the minds of men from the chains of slavery. Men were equal and entitled to just and equal protection of the laws. Who shall say whether it is more important that the slave owners should be liberated from the

effects of slavery, or for the slaves to be liberated from it? The woes of the slave were tangible and real; visible and manifest, so that he who runs might read. But the deadening and damning spiritual effect of a claim of ownership by one human being over another; a claim of the right to direct the destiny of the inferior, were chains binding the spiritual life of men as really as shackles which bound the hands and feet of the slaves. Lincoln not only freed the slaves; he freed the nation; and its progress from that day to this has been a progress in the full light of liberty. The results of his fidelity have been astounding unbelievable. Lincoln thought of the nation as rich and prosperous and inquired in agony "Have we in our prosperity forgotten God?" And yet, to preserve our liberty we spent twice as much money in the World War as the entire value of all the property in the United States when Lincoln made that statement. Our annual income is now almost four times the total value of all the property in the United States when Lincoln made that statement. We owe some of that prosperity to wise economic policies, to the protective tariff, to the laws regulating public utilities, to better methods of taxation and to greater facilities of transportation and communication, but after we have summed up all that we owe to these things, fundamentally, we owe our prosperity to a practical application of the principles of Lincoln which redefined the value of the individual man, his right to that which he has earned by the sweat of his brow, and to the governmental and spiritual union he preserved and extended which has opened to every man the market and the opportunities of this great continent.

The nation has tried to express its regard and veneration for Lincoln in that marvellous marble memorial, facing the Capitol in Washington. There in silent simplicity and dignity sits a plain man looking thoughtfully from beneath his shaggy eyebrows toward the Washington monument. This heroic figure, beloved by a nation and revered by the world, not lifted up and not cast down; born in a cabin; a humble laborer; a rail splitter; a flat-boat man; a struggling country lawyer, of what does he think as he looks across that mirror pool to the capitol of this great nation? Of what does he think as he sees the monument to Washington, in uncompleted ugliness when the Union was threatened, now completed -- a symbol and result of the Union preserved by the efforts and the faith of the pioneer lad born in obscurity and poverty. Perhaps he is thinking of the resolution of a lank country rustic from the North, witnessing for the first time the sale of a human being upon the auction block -- "If I ever got a chance I'll hit that thing and hit it hard". None was so poor or so credulous as to note this resolve. Yet it was cherished in a bosom clad in homespun and registered in high heaven. Perhaps he ponders over the steps leading from that slave market to a room in the White House, where with a stroke of the pen he "hit that thing" so hard that it was destroyed forever. Perhaps he is thinking proudly of the boys in blue, who made this possible, and sadly of the boys in gray, who made it difficult. "How often would I have gathered you to my bosom even as a hen gathereth her chickens and ye would not". But his eyes turn to the South. What's this? Boys in blue and in gray fighting shoulder to shoulder, to free Cuba; a new star is added to the galaxy of free nations. Again his eyes turn to the East. World war; our boys from the North and the South, the East and the West, fighting in France; Democracy again on trial. Again "God is tramping out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored". The smoke of battle clears; sixteen new republics appear; liberty and union are marvellously extended.

But if he sits there for a thousand years, what will he then see? Will he not see the capitol of a nation grown powerful and wealthy and wise, and yet devoting that power and that wealth and that wisdom to the things for which Lincoln labored and died -- freedom, equality, liberty, justice, mercy and brotherhood.

On this birthday of Lincoln, in the city he loved, it is for us to here dedicate ourselves to that for which Lincoln labored. It is for his country-men to seek and to establish justice. It is for us to adore and revere and serve the just God Lincoln believed in and appealed to in his distress, for it is Lincoln's greatest service that he has shown us God, and proved for us the just and loving interest of the Creator in man.

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